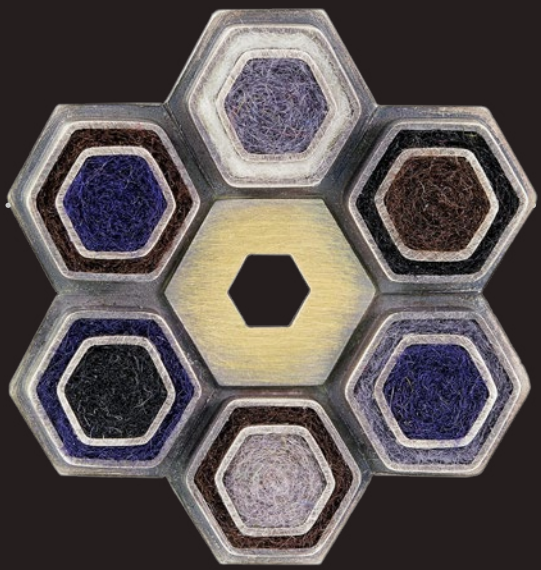
FALL–WINTER 2020 / VOL. 3 NO. 2

METALSMITH TECH

SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICAN GOLDSMITHS



TECH ELEMENT

Messengers of Matter

TECH TEACH

Discover the Pack Rat Within

TECH TOOLKIT

Ornamental Line Chasing: Tools and Techniques

downeast
www.downeasttrading.com
downeast@sover.net
800.626.5700

virtual workshops at **Pocosin Arts**

*where every seat is **front row***

*even from **1000 miles away***

photo: **alex boyd**

POCOSIN ARTS
School of Fine Craft

full online workshop schedule at
*pocosinarts.org/**pocosinartsonline***

Kayla Staiavil

Laritza Garcia

ONLINE MEMBERSHIP CATALOG

WE ARE SNAG: ANTHOLOGY

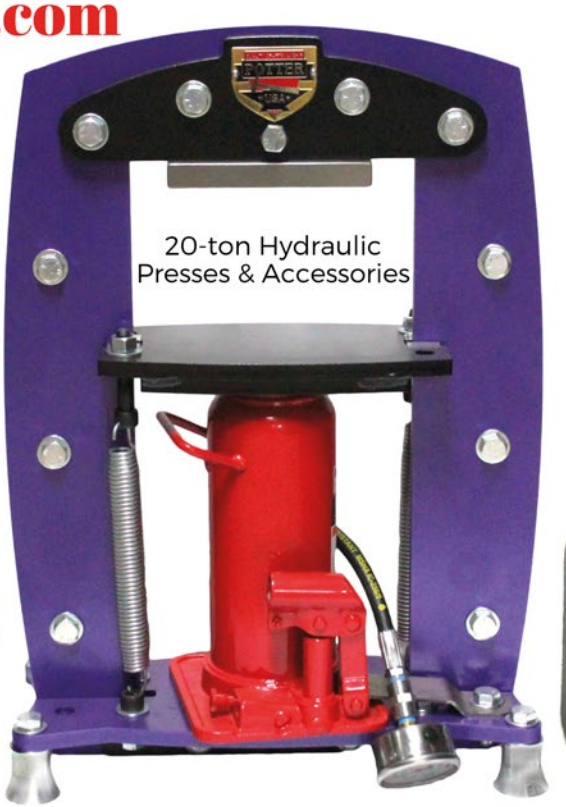
DEADLINE FEBRUARY 28,2021
SELECT WORK WILL BE HIGHLIGHTED IN METALSMITH MAGAZINE

Isabelle Busnell

Joshua Kosker

POTTER USA PotterUSA.com

Impression Dies



Pancake Dies

Pattern Plates

Fine-silver Stampings

4 FOREWORD

6 STUDIO VIEWS
New Studio Practices during Covid-19
Andrea Harvin-Kennington

10 TECH ELEMENT
Messengers of Matter
Alison Antelman

27 TECH EVENT
Austin Forging Competition
Ana M. Lopez

TECH TEACH
16 Discover the Pack Rat Within
A handbook on the how and why of preserving the paper trail of your artistic practice. *Rebekah Frank*

TECH TOOLKIT
20 Ornamental Line Chasing: Tools and Techniques
Limited access to tools and resources? Here's a technical guide and DIY tool tutorial designed to help you find creative possibilities. *Victoria Lansford*

Cover:
• **Michele A Friedman**
Hex Brooch, 2019 (see p.12)
• **Victoria Lansford,**
Arc IV, 2016 (see p.21)

Luana Coonen
Mirrored Ramalina & Forest Flora (series of two brooches), 2016

Metalsmith is published by the Society of North American Goldsmiths

Artists. Designers. Jewelers. Metalsmiths. The Society of North American Goldsmiths advances jewelry and metalsmithing by inspiring creativity, encouraging education, and fostering community.
www.snagmetalsmith.org

Copyright 2020 by Society of North American Goldsmiths, all rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written consent is prohibited.

Metalsmith (ISSN 0270-1146) is published both in print and digital formats in February, May, August, and November by SNAG, PO Box 1355, Eugene, OR 97440, 541.345.5689, www.snagmetalsmith.org.

The opinions expressed in *Metalsmith* are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the staff or directors of SNAG or *Metalsmith*.

Membership rates: $94/year and up, full membership includes four-issue subscription to *Metalsmith*. Special rates available. Subscription to only *Metalsmith*: $33/year and up.

Postmaster/Members/ Subscribers/Copies
Metalsmith is not forwarded by the post office. Send all address changes and any other requests, including missing issues, to SNAG, PO Box 1355, Eugene, OR 97440, 541.345.5689, info@snagmetalsmith.org. Claims for missing issues are accepted only if received within three months of publication.

Metalsmith is indexed in the Art Index and EBSCO Media. Newsstand distribution: COMAG Marketing Group, 155 Village Blvd, Princeton, NJ 08540.

Printed in the U.S.A.

Editor
Adriane Dalton,
adalton@snagmetalsmith.org

Contributing Editor
Kate Hensler Fogarty

Advertising
John Garbett,
jgarbett@snagmetalsmith.org

Graphic Design
Heather White,
Pixel37 Design

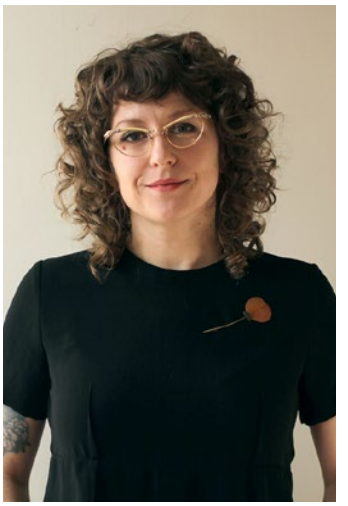
SNAG Managing Director
John Garbett

SNAG Board of Directors
President
Kat Cole
Secretary
April Wood
Treasurer
Anne Havel

Dominique Bereiter
Michael Brehl
Dianne deBeixedon
Ben Dory
Patricia Madeja
Stacy Rodgers
Elizabeth Shypertt
Demitra Thomloudis
Kee-ho Yuen

Supporters include readers like you, and
Dominique Bereiter
Michael Brehl
Susie Ganch
Otto Frei
Rio Grande
Village Silversmith

FOREWORD



Among the many things highlighted by the uncertainty and chaos of 2020 were the spirit of ingenuity and adaptability through which artists (especially jewelry and metal artists, in my opinion) navigate the world.

In a timely piece, Andrea Harvin-Kennington shares how she is negotiating safety while continuing to teach in her studio space. As nimble as artists can be—as exemplified in Alison Antelman's piece on three jewelers whose skilled work seamlessly integrates metal with uncommon materials—let's admit that sometimes the administrative aspects of a career can feel labyrinthian. Rebekah Frank demystifies the many varieties of documentation an artist might need. At a time when many artists are continuing to grapple with lack of public access to studios and equipment, Victoria Lansford provides some do-it-yourself toolmaking tips and shows the creative possibilities for ornamental line chasing.

In the second installment of a new column, *Tech Event*, Ana M. Lopez shares her experience at the 2020 Austin Forging Competition. In this age of social distancing, it is a bittersweet reminder of the power of artists gathering in community to support their neighbors.

This has been a year of rolling with changes and planning ahead with no sure idea of what forms and structures the future holds. In this second digital issue, we've embedded instructional videos.

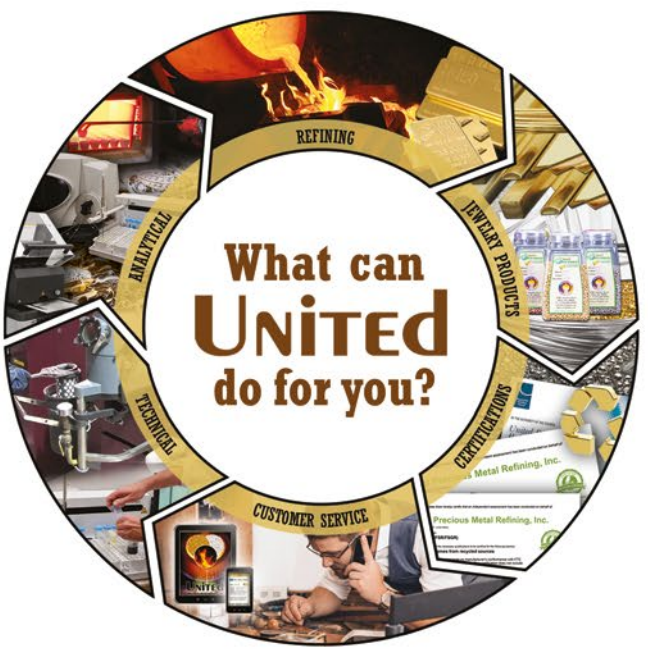
As we expand the possibilities of a digital publication, we hope you'll share feedback on what you'd like to see more of: editor@snagmetalsmith.org

—Adriane Dalton, Editor

The mission of *Metalsmith Tech* is to focus on techniques, processes, educational philosophies and ideas, professional development topics, and new technology in the field of jewelry and metalsmithing. The magazine will include both contemporary and historical references, highlighting a diverse range of approaches to jewelry design and metalwork, including professional practices, creative influences, and new trends.

A full circle of capabilities...

United PMR is a full service refiner and supplier of precious metals, serving the jewelry industry.



UNITED
PRECIOUS METAL REFINING, INC.

800.999.FINE
www.UnitedPMR.com

Certified as Environmentally & Ethically Responsible

COMEX APPROVED

EXPERIENCE you can count on • **RESULTS** you can trust
STABILITY & FINANCIAL STRENGTH since 1988...

NEW! Artist Residency Opportunities

MAY THROUGH SEPTEMBER

Visit our website for Internships, Scholarships, and Workshops.

Touchstone
CENTER FOR CRAFTS
South of Pittsburgh, PA
724.329.1370

TOUCHSTONECRAFTS.ORG

A good tool makes all the difference.

Bowl overlay by James Miller, hand cut with a Knew Concepts Jeweler's Saw.

WWW.KNEWCONCEPTS.COM

"This series of work, called *History is Watching*, feels hyper-relevant with current global events.

I started the series last Christmas, unaware of how contextual they would be."

Brooch from the *History is Watching* series, 2019
Copper, glass coyote eye, Arkansas quartz, 24k gold leaf, colored pencil
Photo by the artist

Top:
Brooch from the *History is Watching* series, 2019
Sterling silver, glass raven eye, Sleeping Beauty turquoise
Photo by the artist

"I will not return to in-person workshops until close human contact is safe again."

STUDIO VIEWS

New Studio Practices during Covid-19

One teaching artist's approach to pandemic studio safety

BY ANDREA HARVIN-KENNINGTON

My studio practices have changed drastically due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Like everyone else, finding my path as an artist and instructor during this time has been fraught with uncertainty. My teaching ground to a halt in March due to lockdown, which gave me a little time to sleep, rest, bicycle, cook, garden, and think. I thought about how, after forty years in this industry, and eleven years on the road teaching, I would move forward.

I have been teaching workshops in my personal studio for twenty-five years and group workshops all over the US for more than fifteen years. I will not return to in-person workshops until close human contact is safe again. Instead, like many others, I am teaching digitally, and, with new Covid-19 protections in place, I am teaching in my private studio.

Currently, I'm only teaching one student in person. In order to achieve a safe in-person class environment, the student and I had to agree to a Covid-19 teaching "pod."

Teaching Pod

First, my student and I both got Covid tests when they became available in our communities. Then we made an agreement to self-isolate and social distance so that the pod was not breached. I understand that this is not always possible with students, especially those who care for family members or live in a household. Fortunately, my current student is able to stay in the pod in order to have weekly sessions. Masks are also *mandatory* at all times by both parties when in class, and a six-foot distance is maintained.

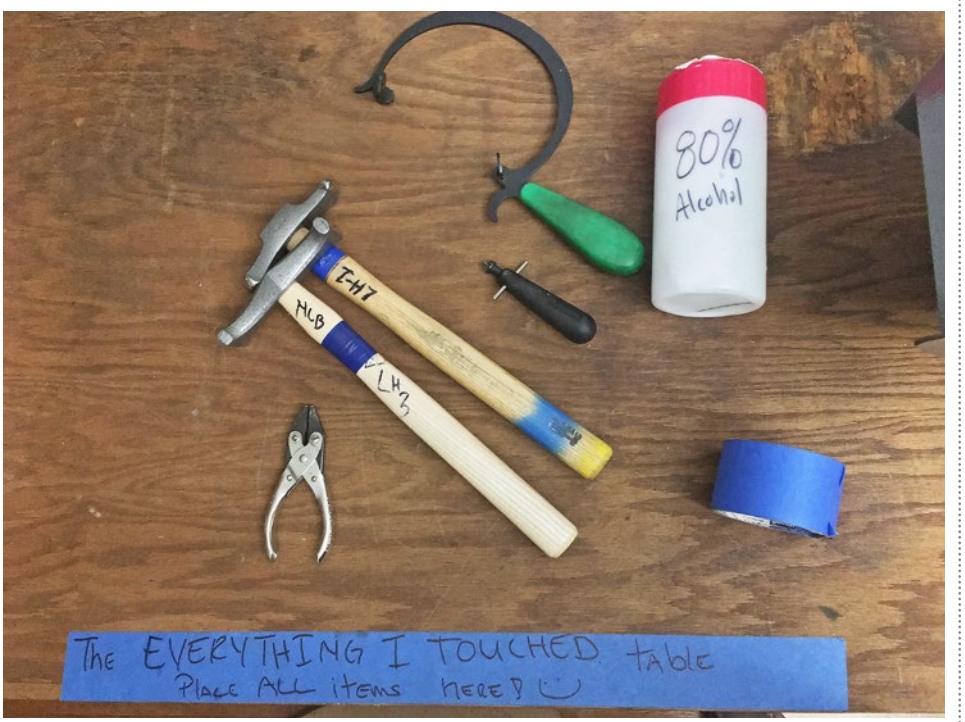
To resume in person instruction, I had to meet some serious studio safety requirements:

Negative Air Flow System (NAFS)

I have had true negative air flow in my studio for over a decade. I purposely designed the system years ago so that I would not be subjected to inhaling or ingesting many of the chemicals jewelers use in their work. I recently adjusted it for maximum outflow and power. I appreciate that most studios cannot put a NAFS in place without great cost. However, it was a non-negotiable for me.

Hand Sanitizer & Alcohol Spray

I supply plenty of disinfectants throughout the studio, and handwashing throughout the day is mandatory.



Large Hand Tool Contact Tracing

I set up a separate area in the studio for large items like hammers and stakes. The "Everything I Touched Table" is for hammers or hand tools that will not fit in the Ultra Violet Sterilization Oven (UVSO), and are placed on the table after each use. These items get wiped down with 80% alcohol wipes and then a coating of Remington Rem® oil (tool, steel, and gun oil).

Six-Foot Markers

I marked six-foot lengths from all the equipment, soldering bench, etc, so that we can easily discuss issues safely while socially distanced and with masks on.

UV Sterilization Oven (UVSO)

This technology has been used in barbershops and salons for decades. I purchased a large commercial UVSO to sterilize all typical hand tools and tiny things like burs, drills, and instruments that are impossible to wipe down daily or after a student has used them. The oven sterilizes them in ten to fifteen minutes, depending on how many tools are inside. Large tools like hammers and stakes are tracked and sterilized under a separate protocol. Everything I own can go in the oven, including my mask, phone, and keys.

Plastic Partitions

I placed clear commercial-grade plastic curtains between the benches. If I have to discuss a metalwork issue with the student, then we can safely be in close proximity of each other with masks on and NAFS running. The clear plastic partition allows visibility while serving as a barrier.

Equipment Contact Tracing

Tracing and tracking everything that has been touched is imperative. We use blue painter's tape to mark each and every piece of large equipment, so at the end of the day they can be sterilized with a 10% bleach and water solution. For example, if my student uses my buffing machine, she marks that with blue tape, and she knows that she needs to wipe it down with the bleach solution and wipes.

I do not foresee returning to in-person group classes until 2021. I hope this article helps any makers who are contemplating returning to teaching in these trying times. As I see it, hybrid learning is the future, and instructors and students are going to demand sterile environments and equipment for on-site classes.

Metalsmith Andrea Harvin-Kennington has been involved in the metals industry for more than twenty-seven years. She earned her MFA in Metals Design from East Carolina University in 1994 and apprenticed with Betty Helen Longhi from 1995 to 1997. During her apprenticeship, Harvin-Kennington began teaching at the Sawtooth School for Visual Art, and continued teaching there until 2010. She has owned and operated Kennington Designs since 1994. In 2009, Harvin-Kennington established NC Black Co. in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, where she and her team craft microtools for metalworking.

TECH ELEMENT

Messengers of Matter

Three jewelers who display a sensitivity of understanding to their materials.

BY ALISON ANTELMAN

CONTEMPORARY JEWELERS HAVE THE FREEDOM to pursue the use of alternative, or non-precious, materials based on concept, vision, design, and function. These materials are often unexpected in jewelry, straying from the norm and of little or no perceivable societal value. Designer René Lalique in the early nineteenth century used what were, at the time, considered alternative materials, including bone, opal, and tortoise shell. Mid-century modernists such as Margaret De Patta used optical quartz, wood, and semi-precious stones. Carrying out their visions, these artists had the desire for jewelry to be art. Art jewelry is about the maker's voice, not the value of materials; often, it's personal.

Defying the expectation that jewelry be made from precious materials, these jewelers give their work value by creating wearable art. Butterfly wings, lichen, and patterns in nature are enmeshed within Luana Coonen's desire to show microcosms in our environment. Felt is Michele A Friedman's pliable and painterly material through which she plays with color, patterns, and texture. Jessica Andersen is always on the lookout for refuse or detritus, whether human made or found in nature, she transforms seemingly worthless items into something of value.

The Naturalist

Having landed in Oakland, California, from Hawaii, Luana Coonen focuses on every blade of grass poking through a cracked sidewalk, fallen leaves, and earthly debris from nature coating the city streets with bits of flora. Honing in on those small wonders, she finds life sprouting in tidbits throughout the urban jungle. Her focus on specific elements is captured and framed in precious metal, including branching patterns, trees, roots, and veins, parts of butterfly wings, and small hairs of lichen sandwiched between polycarbonate, like a specimen collected to preserve a species.

Coonen's jewelry showcases those elements by encapsulating small fragments from nature, celebrating organic matter that some may have never considered as a potential medium. "I get an essence of this little world," she says. She'll carefully cut out a segment of a larger leaf or part of an insect wing and "set" it in polycarbonate. Then she'll drill, cut, and pierce sterling silver to finish her design. In her *Morpho Encasement* earrings, an indigo, opalescent wing is encased in clear polycarbonate, to which sterling findings are riveted. For her *Rose Petal Encasement* earrings, Coonen showcases the "veins" of the eerily translucent and delicate rose petals. At first

Luana Coonen
Deluxe Oval Encasement Necklace, 2019
Silver, polycarbonate, butterfly wings, snakeskin, luna moth wings, maidenhair fern branches
12 x 4½ x ¼ in.
Photo by the artist

Luana Coonen
Mirrored Ramalina & Forest Flora (series of two brooches), 2016
Sterling silver, polycarbonate, acrylic, steel, lace lichen, bug-eaten leaf
2 x 1¾ x ½ in. (each)
Photo by the artist

glance, it is not obvious that these are rose petals and so the artist plays with viewers' perceptions of the familiar flower.

Coonen's *Mirrored Ramalina & Forest Flora* brooches use pierced silver to reference the imprints and patterns of her natural materials. Her goal is to get people to notice these tiny details by presenting a specific part, as if magnified.

In Hawaii, nature dominates; in Oakland, amidst the density and industrialization, Coonen clung to nature's presence, experiencing it between asphalt and concrete. The transition was difficult for her. When they were kids, her father took her and her sister to the dump, the end of the line for waste. Growing up on an island, she was made aware that garbage doesn't go away. Her commitment to protecting the environment is reflected in her artistic practice.

At California College of the Arts, in Oakland, Coonen soon realized graphic design wasn't for her and changed her major to jewelry. Challenged to use nonmetal elements in her work, she found an ivy leaf on campus, pressed and dried the misty fairy-like plant, and encased it in an old plastic CD case. "I want to make more of these," she thought, feeling like a defiant teenager. In her junior year of college, she was required to make a piece of jewelry based on a quote that resonated with her. She observed how as African tulip seed pods (a plant as common in Hawaii as dandelions are on the mainland US) crack open, they reveal a clear clingwrap-like membrane with a seed inside. When the wind catches the heart-shaped seed, it flutters through the air. This observation evoked something Coonen's sister once said, "Keep your mind clear and let it come from the heart."

This quote kept coming back to her as a grounding theme after her move to Oakland. Coonen began researching patterns in nature.[1] She was fascinated by the branching patterns found in trees, roots, veins, and even lightning. Aesthetically attracted to the ephemeral, the visual language of branches reminded her of the way human veins branch out, flowing away and toward the heart. Coonen often hand pierces these patterns in silver and contemplates the connection between branching in nature and inside the anatomical human heart.

Coonen's archive consists of organic specimens collected by her or mailed to her by those who understand her objectives. "Throughout the year, I'll get some pretty interesting boxes in the mail," she muses, pointing to her cabinet of curiosities, or her "little boxes of joy." On the shelves above her bench is the library of materials in organized containers. Everything is categorized, from butterfly wings, leaf skeletons, snakeskin, insect wings, moth wings, and branches of red coral—a rare material which she uses only when inspiration arises. Coonen is always looking for materials, and sets out on hikes with containers for safe transport. One of her major finds was a perfectly desiccated goat skull; figuring out how to bring *that* home on a flight was a challenge. Like any jeweler, this collection is precious, carefully curated, and used with deliberate regard. The materials Coonen uses are personal, noting the "sentimentality of finding something special." A leaf, beaten with rain and sun, or partially disintegrated debris found on a storm-tossed beach, these are the moments in time Coonen encapsulates in her jewelry.

The Architect

"Everything for me starts out with shapes," says Michele A Friedman. First, she distills individual shapes from both human made and naturally occurring patterns such as rose petals, architectural findings, and

Michele A Friedman
Hex Brooch, 2019
Oxidized sterling silver, 18k bi-metal, wool felt
1½ x 1½ x ¼ in.
Artist collection
Photo: Cole Rodger Photographics

geometric designs. Then she figures out how and where they'll be worn on the body.

Friedman grew up in Chicago, where urban architecture played a big part in her daily life, and the Art Institute of Chicago was her playground. As a child enrolled at the young artist studio, she traipsed past the Chagall windows, visited the miniatures and armor rooms, and became enthralled by the stories permeated those halls. It was a Louise Nevelson[2] sculpture that truly spoke to her: "All of the shapes, the scale, the composition, spoke to me. Small scale within large scale: you could get lost in it," she says.

"I make stones out of wool felt," Friedman says, as she shows me works in progress; metal cells metal or "settings" await their inlay, similar to enamels dispersed into channels for cloisonné.

The materials Coonen uses are personal, noting the "sentimentality of finding something special." A leaf, beaten with rain and sun, or partially disintegrated debris found on a storm-tossed beach, these are the moments in time Coonen encapsulates in her jewelry.

"My application is from a jewelers' standpoint, using rich colors and a hint of texture." On her workbench, she shows me strips of felt in varied widths and in colors such as pea-green, cranberry, raspberry persimmon, and cinnamon. The strips, which resemble millefiori[3] cane are cut and used in her designs. As I'm leaning over looking at these prepared parts, I see it: her painterly approach to jewelry, mixed with architectural design and interaction of color.[4]

Michele A Friedman
Perfect Tree Brooch, Autumn, 2016
Oxidized sterling silver,
18k bi-metal, wool felt
3½ x 2½ x ⅛ in.
Private collection
Photo: Cole Rodger Photographics

"I had always wanted to incorporate color into my work," says Friedman. Her quest led her to try enamels, painting, watercolors, resin, paper, fabric, and Formica. Serendipity brought her to experiment with felt. She inlays wool felt into her metal designs, which often include repetitive shapes with clear outlines. Felt gives her the ability to play with color, pattern, texture, blocking, and shading. A good editor of her own work—too much pattern or bright colors creates a frenetic energy or *ungapatchka*[5]—she knows when to tone down the chaos, seamlessly blending felt into the sterling silver. Like a painter, Friedman takes light into consideration, shading certain areas where it's presumably darker, and brighter in areas that get direct sunlight. She often contemplates the reality of colors in nature versus artistic license.

Friedman's jewelry reflects her clear vision. A design influenced from nature, her *Blue Mum Necklace* transitions from darker blue to a subtle variety of lighter hues. Friedman spares no detail, including the gradient shades of lime and yellow in the stamen. Her urban architectural environment comes through in her *Hex Brooch*, with an array of dark blue and charcoal hues that evoke concrete and suits, in a buttoned-up metropolis. The *Perfect Tree* and *Rose Brooches* explode with bright colors, as if the sun is hitting them on a late summer day.

Friedman has always wanted to be a fashion designer, but, by the end of her first year in college, she became a metals major. Between time at Parsons School of Design in New York, working in a Chicago gallery learning the business, and doing bench work for a goldsmith, she had a multifaceted education. Throughout the years she kept a daily sketchbook, sketching shapes which became blueprints for designs she sought to make wearable.

"It's a lifetime of absorption and melding of materials. Anything worthwhile takes time and patience and perseverance," Friedman says.

The Archaeologist

The thrill of the hunt drives Jessica Andersen to scour the beaches in Southern California, the desert, and her family's garage and shed in Iowa for debris. Searching through nails and bolts, old furniture, and parts from farm machinery, the perfect jewels are revealed. Andersen

Where some see garbage, Andersen sees an archaeological history.

makes decisions by instinct, whether it's a mottled patina, a previous color fading away yet still visible, or particular shapes and patterns.

Andersen often uses sterling silver to recontextualize her found objects as jewelry. When a well-worn, patinated found object is fixed into a traditional prong setting, it takes on new life. A brooch with a beautifully crafted double pin stem and sterling setting holds part of a tin can with the tab showing, an elegant treatment for something most of us consider to be garbage. In her necklace *Creature*, she uses parts from steel table legs that look like beautifully patinated beads. With *Two Paddles*, wooden paddles are transformed into a wearable necklace. Another necklace, *Tag,* is made of the aged, yellowed price tags from a tag-sale.

After starting out as a painter at the University of Iowa, Andersen chose metalsmithing as an elective and found her calling. Her first teacher, Jillian Moore,[6] an artist with a craft-discipline background in jewelry, was a great influence, who created a nurturing and supportive environment.

Andersen moved from Iowa to California for graduate school at San Diego State. She reflects on how massive California is when compared to the small town she grew up in, and how the states differ in the variety of trash. "There's so much stuff in the world," she says. She takes these pieces and creates new stories as a jeweler, changing the vernacular into something precious.

Andersen's studio is filled with boxes and buckets of debris she's collected. She has a rotational system of finding objects she likes: she sets different objects out at different times and lets ideas germinate. Carefully, she pulls out bottle caps from Vietnam, given by a friend. She'll visit estate sales, scour online listings, and collect items while camping. Her collection includes wire cords, can tops, crushed rubber, old cigarette box, tie down straps, spoons, scissors, hand beater, tin cans, fake flowers, garage sale tags, and an old canoe paddle.

Where some see garbage, Andersen sees an archaeological history. One of her influences is Gay Hawkins,[7] who wrote *The Ethics of Waste*. The author suggests, what if you look [at garbage] in a different light, seeing beyond your first thought and instead as an object? This object has a past, tied to a person and our civilization. Andersen's "archaeological digs" might not be ancient, but they are revealing. "Objects can be memory holders," she says, and further explains that objects are often site-specific and mark a moment in time.

Andersen is currently working on a series of pieces that she is personally tied to. Her grandfather gives her boxes of tie clips and old buttons in a tin box. This material is so precious to her that she handles each box like an archaeologist dusting off an ancient relic, fearful of damaging it, as it may be the last one known to humanity. After showing the contents to me, she files it away and worries about using it properly. Until then, it sits in the periphery of her mind. She smiles and tells me how her grandfather always asks, "Do you still make tiny things?"

Synthesis to Matter

The metalsmiths I've interviewed create jewelry by integrating traditional techniques and precious metal with unexpected, alternative materials. All three began on different courses, serendipitously following their paths. Each is dedicated to an aesthetic that is an extension of her personal philosophy and studio practice. They are explorers who discover new horizons by taking risks. With open minds, The Naturalist, The Architect, and The Archaeologist found their own voices.

Alison Antelman is a metalsmith, educator, and writer in Berkeley, California.

Jessica Andersen
Tag, 2017
Garage sale tags, silver, brass, steel
5½x 3 x 1½ in.
Photo by the artist

1 Natural patterns include symmetries, trees, spirals, meanders, waves, foams, tessellations, cracks and stripes. / **2** Louise Nevelson was an American sculptor known for her monumental, monochromatic, wooden wall pieces and outdoor sculptures. / **3** Millefiori is a glasswork technique which produces distinctive decorative patterns on glassware. "Millefiori" is a combination of the Italian words "mille" (thousand) and "fiori" (flowers). / **4** *Interaction of Color* is Josef Albers's 1963 book featuring ten color studies. / **5** *Ungapatchka* is a Yiddish word to describe something ridiculously over decorated, excessive ornamentation, or kitsch. / **6** As a quick clarification [from Jillian Moore], Jessica Andersen was in first class that I taught as a TA during my time as a graduate student. I did get to teach a few classes as a TA, so not the *only* time I taught exactly, but the *first* time I taught and the only time in my life when I was instructing in an academic sense. So for such a brief window of time doing so, it is truly a delight to have Jessica come out of that chapter. / **7** Gay Hawkins is author of *The Ethics of Waste: How We Relate to Rubbish*, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006.

Jessica Andersen
Two Paddles, 2018
Paddles, wood, brass
42 x 15 x 2 in.
Photo by the artist

Photo: Sharon McCutcheon, Unsplash

TECH TEACH

Discover the Pack Rat Within

Why documentation is important, now and in the future

BY REBEKAH FRANK

> *How do we capture the attention of creatives to understand the importance of documenting their work and thinking about their legacy? ....*
>
> *Artists should consider what they are leaving behind after they are gone. Will it be 97,000 slides in a dusty box, or will they have some form of catalog lovingly prepared? It may be up to the artist themself to maintain that documentation.*
>
> *— Beth Goodrich, American Craft Council Archive*

HELLO FELLOW JEWELRY ARTISTS, MAKERS, AND ENTREPRENEURS. This article addresses a topic you've certainly heard about before. The idea might make you yawn, turn the page, or drift off on a daydream, but stay with me. It's important. Ready?

Documentation is an integral part of being an artist. What is it, you ask? Documentation tells your story as an artist and provides background about the making of a piece. It places your work in an art-historical narrative, which holds added importance when working within an underrepresented medium or tradition. Documentation is all the words that accompany the physical objects you make. As artists, we tend to think of documentation as a tedious chore. We became artists because we like to make *things*, not stare at screens or blank pieces of paper. But by the end of this article, I hope to convince you of why keeping up on your documentation will make your art life easier.

TYPES OF DOCUMENTATION

ARTISTIC IDENTITY DOCUMENTATION

Documentation includes your artist statement, biography, CV, and any supporting material that accompanies your work, such as business cards, postcards, wall text, email and social media, communication, published articles; the list goes on.

Let's start with the content that you have the most control over. These three things represent the written core of your artistic identity. You'll use them over and over again to apply for grants and exhibitions, to send to galleries and collectors interested in your work, and to include in catalogs and monographs. Taking a little time each year to update them is time well spent.

Artist Statement

Typically, this is a formal statement using five-dollar words to describe what you think your art is about. Formal institutions require formal statements, so applying for grants, anything in academia, and museums is where this document is most appropriate. Since a formal statement is often inscrutable to the layperson, it's good practice to also have an informal statement for others to read. Remember, artspeak is a barrier to accessibility, and being impenetrable is not a good look.

It's also helpful to have one statement for your overall art practice, a short statement for each individual body of work, and a short statement for each standalone piece. An artist statement ranges from one paragraph to one page, but no more than that.

Biography

This document is a short recounting of your life that provides context for your practice. It can read like your resume in paragraph form or be more personal in tone. Typically, it includes your education and location. Its purpose is to give a glimpse into how you became the artist you are now. It can be fun to include a juicy tidbit to get people interested, so be sure to include that extra-special something about yourself. This is where your hyphenated identities, personal experience, and unique attributes aid in the understanding of who you are and why you make your work.

CV

This is where the really good stuff goes. A CV is a bullet-pointed list of all your artistic accomplishments, typically listed in reverse chronological order and grouped by category. I recommend having two versions—one with *every single thing* you've ever done and one that is the highlight reel, one or two pages max. Update them at least once a year and, if possible, have them accessible on your website.

SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

Supplemental documentation can be more personal. The following three types of supplemental documentation highlight your relationship with your inner self, your outward presentation, and your correspondence with others. Together, they add depth to your artistic identity.

Communication

This can include the letters and emails that you write to your teachers, mentors, collectors, and gallerists, as well as the rejection and the acceptance letters. Also your past presentation decks, like PowerPoints or slideshows, and notes for your artist talks and lectures about your work.

Promotional Materials

The business cards, postcards, posters, etc., that are generated by you, or for you, are fun to create and important to keep track of. These files are interesting to look at and great memory devices; and it can be hilarious to see how your graphic style has changed over the course of your career. This is where your inner pack rat can run free.

Journal/Sketchbook

If you are a journaler, either with words or with sketches, you already know that journals are an incredible insight into your thought processes. But don't forget they are an intriguing addition to your practice for others to see as well.

OTHER DOCUMENTATION

Lastly, there is the text written by others about you. These pieces are hard to get, and should be cherished and celebrated.

Wall Text

In the excitement of an exhibition, it is easy to forget to document the wall text. Typically written by curators for a museum audience, these wall texts show how others contextualize your work and are great reminders that, yes, your exhibition really happened.

Printed Publications

Keep every single piece that has ever been written about you: articles, catalog essays, reviews (good or bad), press releases—anything and everything. Be the proud "art mom" of your success and scrapbook them, frame them, or at least digitally toss them in a folder.

Note: *Of course, documentation also includes photographs, but for the purpose of this article, I'm going to focus on the printed matter. Overall, I think most artists understand the importance of photographing their work, and there are many articles that address how to do this well.*

INFORMATION TO INCLUDE

ARTIST STATEMENT	ARTIST BIOGRAPHY	OBJECT INFORMATION	CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)
Artist Name	Artist Name	Artist Name	Artist Name
Intent	Background	Title	Birth Place/Date
Influences	Lived Experience	Part of a Series?	Education
Avoid Art Speak	Include Juicy Tidbits	Edition Number (Ex: 1 of 5)	Solo Exhibitions
		Date Made	Group Exhibitions
		Object Type	Awards
		Material List	Residencies
		Maker's Marks	Lectures
			Workshops
			Collections

> *"As a maker I always felt my work should 'speak for itself.' However, I find that the more articulate I can be, the more others are willing and able and enthusiastic about engaging with the work. This is the same for me if I am the viewer. As a teacher, I have taught 'professional practices' type classes where the students write artist's statements. They often resist, and despite the fact that part of me still wants the work to exist in some autonomous vacuum, it truly helps me to understand the student and their practice better."*
>
> *–Judith Schaechter, stained glass artist*

Photo: Kimberly Farmer, Unsplash

REASONS FOR DOCUMENTATION

Now that we have defined what documentation is, let's look at why keeping it is important for your artistic life right now. So often, we look at documentation as an end-of-life endeavor, something that is for the future. In reality, keeping good records helps you expand your practice and reach for new opportunities.

Knowing your artistic self

Self reflection is not always fun, but it is a necessary part of being an artist. When you look at past artist statements you'll see how your practice evolved, and can take that into account as you write your new statement. Your constantly growing CV is *your* success story and a record of past achievements. Seeing your past promotional material is also a reminder of what you've done and can inspire you to try something new. Reviewing your journals and sketchbooks can remind you of a forgotten idea and inspire you to try again. Reading reference letters from the past is a great pick-me-up, especially when times are lean.

Communicating your story with others

The all-important process of convincing others to see you and your work is often conducted through words. These documents contain the seeds of every grant application, response to an exhibition call, conversation with a gallerist, and artist talk. Instead of starting from scratch, having these documents on hand allows you to cut and paste for each new opportunity. It will also allow you to respond and apply to new opportunities quickly and professionally—which will make you look really good. Each time you apply, you'll evolve and expand to meet the required application criteria and in doing so, create a new understanding of your work for yourself and others.

Making your experience accessible

I strongly believe that an artist CV should be on your website. Why? Because your success is a ladder for the artists coming next. Share your artist statement, show your growth, include your biography, add links to the publications you've been in—not just for your ego but to show others the way. Be sure to include the awards, residencies, and grants you've received—the artists coming up behind you will appreciate it.

Building a network

Every achievement you have involves other people: the curators, collectors, writers, galleries, professors and mentors. Keeping track of your records includes keeping track of these essential people. As your career continues to grow, so will your network, but only if you maintain it.

Misconceptions About Documentation

Some artists have what they see as valid reasons for not doing this work. Let's do our due diligence and give those reasons a look.

"Art should speak for itself" This is a very familiar argument. While I would agree that an artist shouldn't need to give a two-hour lecture for a piece of art to be understood, documentation isn't simply an explanation. Instead, it puts the work, the artist, and the practice in its appropriate context. This argument also comes from a place of privilege. Why? In the context of our current museum system, which is dominated by white male artists, led by white administrators, and funded by white donors, artists of other experiences—women, LGBTQIA, BIPOC and all intersections of these experiences—need additional context for their work to be understood.

"I'm not concerned with legacy-building" Perhaps it seems hubristic to think about your "legacy," but your record will be much richer and more complete if you think about it now. If not you, then who? Besides, who are you to say your work won't be important in the future? Do you want to have a monograph written about your work one day? Then start now. Do you think your art matters in the art world dialogue? Prove it. If you want to be taken seriously, then spend the time to treat your work like it matters—now.

"It's too hard..." Please. It's just not. Deep breath, block out two hours, sit your butt down, and get started.

RECIPIENTS OF DOCUMENTATION

In the great scheme of things, you make art for others to enjoy, wear, and collect (and, fingers crossed, to support yourself financially). This includes an entire cast of people who are on the receiving end of your creative brilliance. Once they have the *objet d'art* and a few years have passed, they won't remember the details any longer. In the moment, they think they won't forget when they visited your studio in Paris and you blew their mind, but they will. It's simply human, and that is who we make art for, after all: humans. So by including your documentation with every transaction, having it accessible on your website, and making sure you keep track of your work, you will be able to come to the rescue when your work resurfaces in someone's collection, in a museum bequest, or another magical situation.

Customers/Collectors

Did you know most collectors don't know they are collectors? One day, they wake up to find they've run out of room for their next beautiful, "can't live without it" object, and they think, "OMG, what have I done?!" Keep this in mind if you sell directly to anyone; you don't know at what point they'll realize they are truly collecting and not just avid art appreciators. Provide every direct sale with your CV, biography, and statement. An easy way to slip this information in is to include it as an attachment to the bill of sale in a follow-up email.

Gallerists

If you sell through a gallery, make sure your gallery has your updated documentation on file and find out if they make a practice of sending a documentation packet to their clients. By doing so, you've done your due diligence, and it is now up to the collector to compile your documentation in their collection.

Curators

When your piece is selected for a museum exhibition or for purchase, first—congratulations! Next, curators need your CV, biography, and artist statements, as well as the complete identification of the individual piece. Complete identification includes: artist name, birth date, nationality, titles, comprehensive material list, dimensions, and any marks. This information is entered into the museum database and is an important part of the archival process. If you already have this information together when they reach out, you will look like a rockstar.

Archivists

Archivists are the nicest people. They are librarians extraordinaire who want to keep your work from disappearing into the darkness of history. They are likely to use the word "legacy" in conversation, which freaks out many artists who are often only thinking as far ahead as the next bill cycle. Archivists are called upon by museums and collectors for information about an unknown piece, and then they scramble to try to find that info. By having your documentation in order and available, you make it possible for archivists to find that information easier.

ACTION STEPS

Here's a list of action steps.

- Include your name and contact information on each piece of paper, digital or printed. This seems obvious, but papers get separated, so it really matters.
- Find a system that works for you: a shoe box, a paper filing system, digital files, etc.
- Don't make it overly complicated. For me, organizing by year makes sense.
- Make the cloud work for you. I use a combination of Google Workplace and Dropbox but use what system you are comfortable with.
- Invest in an archiving database, like ArtworkArchive, to streamline the process even more, especially if you have a lot of inventory that moves often.
- Pace yourself and don't compile your documentation all at once.

RESPECT

To close, let's talk about respecting yourself, your art, and your labor. As an artist, you create from a space that is uniquely yours. No one can make the work that you make.

Keeping track of your art is your responsibility; it is part of the job. Someone once told me that an artistic life is like completing an MFA every two to three years.

This work may seem difficult, but writing your own history is powerful. This is especially important for women, people of color, and Black and indigenous people, as well as artists working in non-traditional mediums. While there are still obstacles toward representation, the art world is experiencing a shift right now that will, hopefully, result in more opportunities to show work that has traditionally fallen outside the art historical canon. Taking the time now prepares you for the shift in museum gatekeepers, exhibition opportunities, and archives. Thorough documentation signals not only that you value your work, it demands that others pay attention as well.

Acknowledgements: Thanks to Cindi Straus from the Museum of Fine Art Houston; Beth Goodrich from The American Craft Council (ACC) Archive; Susan Cummins from the Rotasa Collection; Katie Carey from Artwork Archive; and everyone who responded to the survey for their input on this article. All responses influenced the content of this article.

Rebekah Frank is a studio artist and independent writer who enjoys traveling the world in search of interesting experiences to fuel both her art and writing practices. You can find more of her writing and work at www.rebekahfrank.com or on Instagram as @rebekahgailfrank.

> *"With any artist I'm interested in, a CV places the artist and their work in a context, and documents their evolution and growth.*
>
> *A biography gives insight into who they are, and how that's reflected in their work. Interviews, in print or video, put a face and a voice to who the artist is and how their life intersects with their philosophy, aesthetics, and process."*
>
> *– Jeffery Lloyd Dever, Maker*

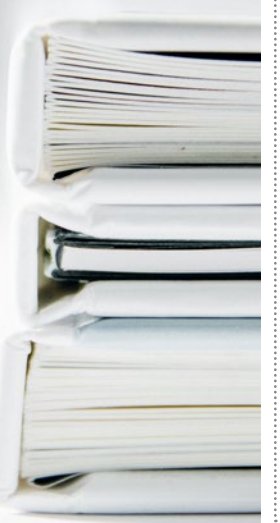


Photo: Beatriz Pérez Moya, Unsplash

TECH TOOLKIT

Ornamental Line Chasing: Tools and Techniques

BY VICTORIA LANSFORD

The Large Line Tool from Victoria's Eastern Repoussé Tool Sets
Photo: Pat Vasquez-Cunningham

ORNAMENTAL LINE CHASING stems from the technique of Eastern repoussé and dates back to ancient Egypt as a way to add decorative images, symbols, and text onto sheet metal that is flat or formed. For repoussé, you need a torch for annealing and an array of tools, including a full set of chasing tools made with a grinder or purchased ready to use, but even when you may not have studio access or the means to set up one at home, you can still learn an exquisite technique that doesn't use much space and can be done with cheap tools mostly from the hardware store.

In terms of design, the sky is the limit. Line chasing can be representational and traditional or abstract and contemporary, and it works for jewelry, hollowware, or on an architectural scale. I have frequently employed it on areas that might ordinarily be sanded smooth, such as on the backs of lockets, the bottoms of boxes, or the sides of large bezels and ring shanks. Texturing metal with chased patterns and designs lessens clean-up time and increases the uniqueness of a piece. Ornamental line chasing offers more individuality to the overall design of a piece than hammer texturing or roller printing with patterned plates. It also permits using thinner sheet such as 22 or 24 gauge on the flat areas of fabricated pieces that would normally require 18 or 20 gauge, because the chased designs disguise any warping that occurs during soldering.

Opposite:
Victoria Lansford
Occulto III (locket), 2004
Sterling silver,
fine silver, 18k gold,
22k gold, moonstone
1⅜ x 1⅜ x ⅜ in. deep,
18 in. chain
Photo by the artist

Chased (back),
wire granulation (front)
locket on a 2-directional
double-weave, loop-in-loop
chain

Right:
Chasing for *Arc IV*
shank in progress

Below right:
Victoria Lansford
Arc IV, 2016
Chased drusy ring
Sterling, 18k gold, titanium
bonded chalcedony drusy
⅞ x ⅞ x 1¼ in.
Photo: Pat Vasquez-Cunningham

LINE CHASING VS. ENGRAVING

Cross section view of sheet metal

Line Chasing
Metal is displaced by the striking of the line tool. Sheet is raised on either side of the line.

Note the roundness of the chased line from the rounded tip of the line tool. The impression is *not* a sharp V.

Engraving
Metal is cut away by graver and removed. Sheet remains smooth on either side of the line.

CHASE WHAT?

12–26 gauge copper, brass, sterling, fine silver, 18k, or 22k gold work best. Steel will work, but may require a line tool made of stronger steel.

The thinner your metal, the more visible the "echo" of your chased design on the flip side. This echo can be a beautiful texture on the inside of a box. Don't want it? Use sheet 20 gauge or thicker.

If you line chase 24 or 26 gauge sheet, hammer very lightly to prevent punching through.

Use dead soft metal, and you won't need to anneal.

Most designs, such as cuff bracelets, ring shanks, or bezels, can be formed after line chasing. A chased strip of flat metal plus a bracelet bender, and voila, you have a cuff bracelet without a torch!

Once proficient, try the technique on already formed metal by supporting the back or inside of the piece with pitch or thermoplastic.

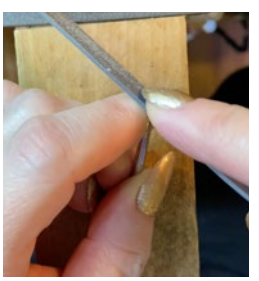
HOW TO MAKE THE PERFECT LINE TOOL

CLICK TO VIEW VIDEO
OR VISIT HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/TECH-LANSFORD-1
The screwdriver is 3.5 mm (.133") wide at the tip and 11.5 cm (4.5") long
(including the handle). If your screwdriver is too wide, you can file it narrower.

No torch? No problem!
You can make a line tool out of a slotted (flat head) screwdriver without a torch or traditional studio set-up. The repurposed tool will require no annealing and therefore no tempering.

A saw, flat file, sandpaper, polishing cloth, earplugs, safety glasses, chasing hammer, scriber, and bench block are all you need to turn your old screwdriver into a line tool that will chase beautiful designs into most thicknesses of nonferrous sheet metal.

The screwdriver will have a flat tip that must be rounded in order to leave a beautiful, rounded mark so it will not cut through your metal by mistake. Use a flat or equaling needle file (#0, #1, or #2 cut) to refine the tip. Hold the needle file parallel to the screwdriver, and place the file against the tip of the screwdriver at about a 20 degree angle. File the tip in an arcing motion that goes from the 20 degree angle to over the top edge as shown in the photos. Flip the screwdriver every few strokes and repeat on the other side so that the tip is equally rounded on both sides. Take care that the curve only happens across the long edge of the tip and not side to side. When the long side of the screwdriver's tip is facing you, the tip should still look straight, not curved.



File the tool in a curving motion beginning at a steep angle. As you file forward, arc the tool over the top.

To make a line tool: First you need to separate the metal portion of the screwdriver from the handle. If the metal portion of the screwdriver sticks out from the handle at least 3.25 inches (83 mm), you can saw it off completely, or you can score it with a saw or a separating disc on a flex shaft. Once scored, secure it in a vice with the excess portion sticking out, and whack the excess portion and handle off with a hammer.

If the metal portion is shorter than 3.25 inches, then you will need to break the handle first. Enclose the handle end of the screwdriver in a cloth bag or old sock. Grip the tool by the screwdriver end, and hold the covering closed. Place the whole works on a steel bench block, and whack the enclosed handle with a heavy ball peen or claw hammer until the plastic breaks off. The bag will prevent the handle's plastic shards from flying around, but wear safety glasses to be safe. If the newly released metal portion of the screwdriver is longer than 3.25 inches you will need to cut it down as described above.

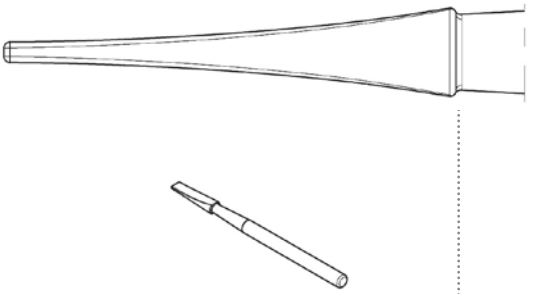


Diagram of large and small line tools' rounded tips

GOT FEATHERS?

"Feathers" are stray, messy-looking, chatter marks along the edges of your line. They happen, especially when you are first learning to chase. Feathering is caused by the line tool hitting the metal just slightly at an angle. The more you line chase, the more control you will gain.

Hammer the lines slowly and lightly at first.

Texture is your friend! By placing texture along both sides of a line, you cover up mistakes, feathering, and stray scribed lines.

Go over your lines lightly after texturing the background to refine them and make them stand out.

Clean chasing takes time and practice. You'll get better with each piece, so be patient with yourself!

Nail sets from the hardware store (used for hammering nails flush into wood) and the decimal point from a number stamp set make wonderful texture tools. Nail sets make great stamps if your design has any circles.

It is possible to "draw" with a line tool the same way you would with a pencil by hammering the tool along the surface of the metal. The process is different from stamping in which the static stamp is hammered in one spot, and the impression it leaves is bound by the stamp's shape. At its most refined, line chasing can look like engraving.

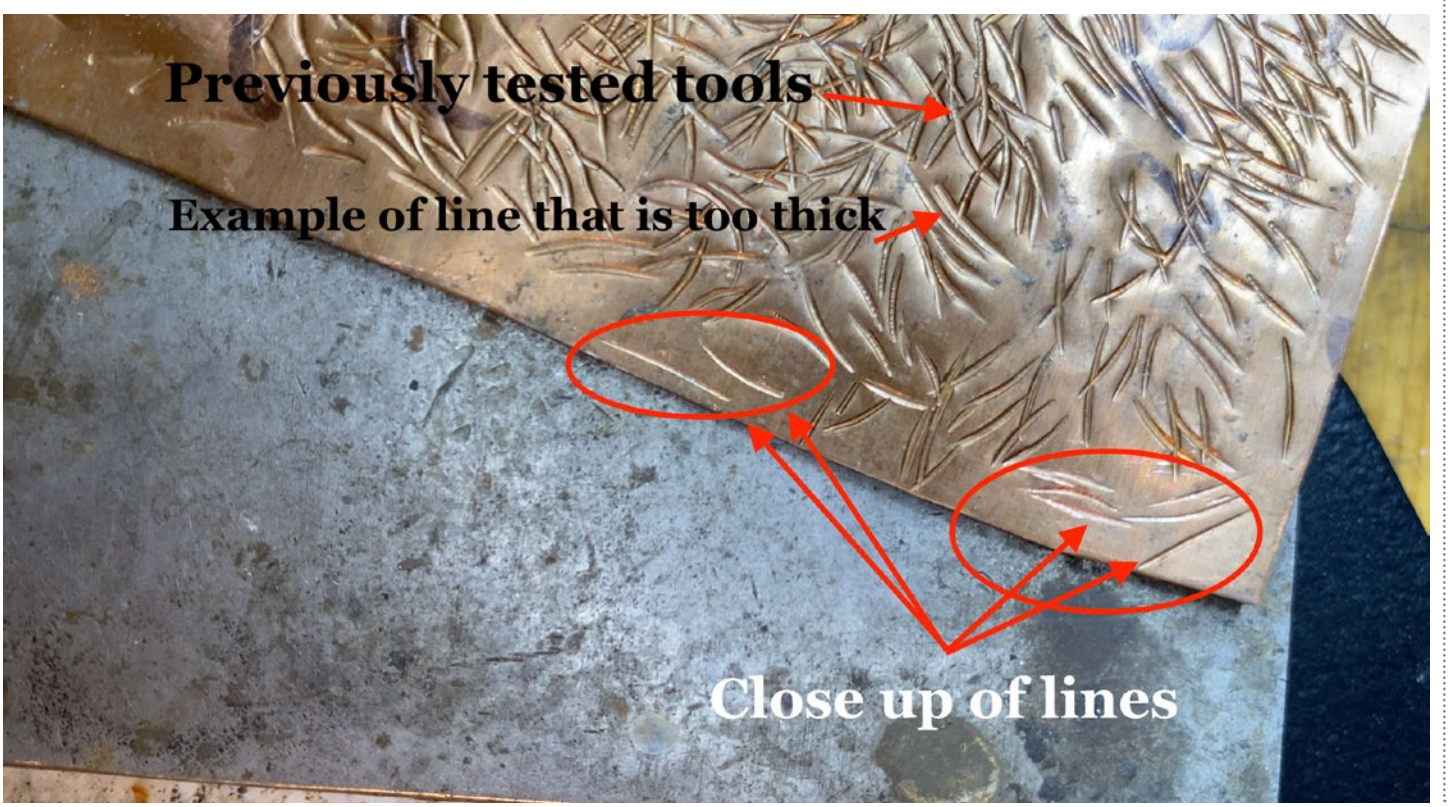
In traditional Eastern repoussé there are three types of tools: push tools to hammer relief from the back of the metal, planishing tools to refine the relief from the front, and line tools to delineate the areas of relief and add details. The line tools alone offer endless possibilities for surface design on complex pieces or on simple forms that do not require annealing or soldering, such as cuff bracelets or earring components. Practice is necessary to become proficient at line chasing, but it requires minimal tools.

Test your tool often. The perfect tool leaves a mark that is U-shaped. Even though you may not yet be adept at chasing smooth lines, you'll see right away if the tool's thickness is irregular or if it has sharp corners or burs sticking out of the mark. If the corners are a problem, drag the needle file over each corner very gently; use pressure similar to filing your fingernails. Lightly file a few times until you can't feel any snags or catches as the file moves across the steel. Be careful! Too much filing on the corners will make the tip of the tool uneven, and the resulting line will not have a consistent thickness.

To remove the file marks, place high-grit sandpaper (at least 1200, preferably 2400 or higher) on a flat surface. Hold the sandpaper and drag the tip of screwdriver back and forth across the sandpaper several times, using the same arcing action as you used with the needle file. Flip the tool and repeat on the other side. Sanding the tip by moving the tool against the stationary sandpaper ensures that the thickness and curve of the tip will be even. It also gives you more leverage to polish it faster. Repeat this process with a with a polishing cloth to remove the sandpaper marks. Your new line tool is ready to use!

Sanding the tool against stationary sandpaper in the same arcing motion

Test your tool often. The perfect tool leaves a mark that is U-shaped.



LARGE OR SMALL LINE TOOL?

The most common sizes of line tools are 3.6 mm wide (for repoussé relief delineation and line chasing) and 2.6 mm wide (to line tighter spots and for more delicate chased ornamentation).

Which size tool to use depends on the scale of the piece and the size of the design. I typically use the Large Line Tool for anything larger than a locket, and the Small Line Tool for bezels, rings, or for super tight curves.

You can make larger line tools if needed for long straight lines or borders.

Because the line tools are slightly different thicknesses, using the Small Line Tool to go over a line created with the Large Line Tool may result in a feathery double line. It is best to go over a line with the same size tool you started with.

TECHNIQUES FOR SUCCESSFUL LINE CHASING

Chasing

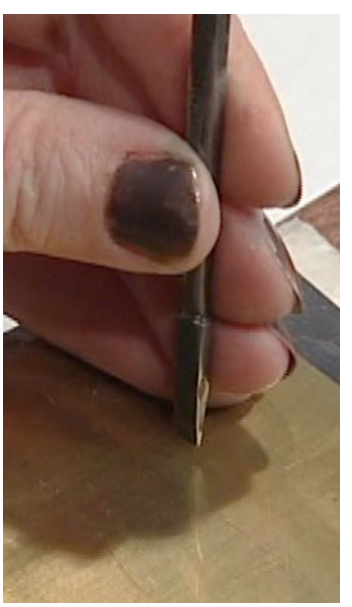
Use a scrap sheet of brass or copper (24 gauge or thicker) to practice chasing and get comfortable holding the tools. Scribe straight lines and various curves onto your metal. Hold the large line tool between your thumb and first two fingers near the tip so that you can easily rotate it. Rest your middle finger on your ring finger and your ring finger on your little finger, which also holds your sheet of metal down to your steel block.

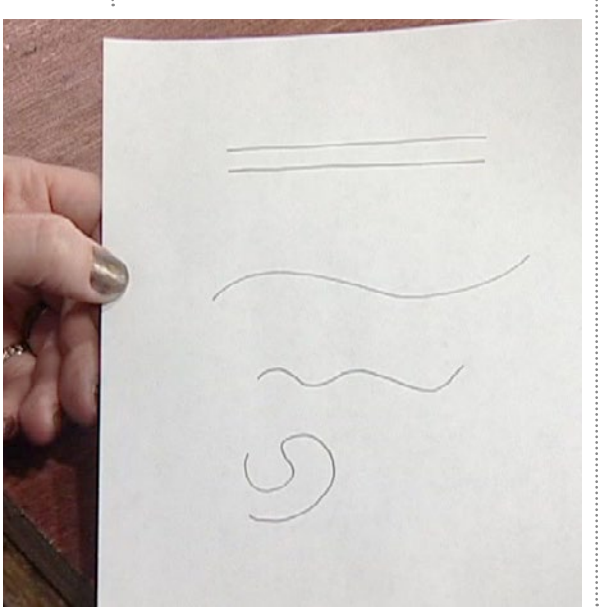
Place the Large Line Tool inside one of the scribed lines so that you can feel the tip of the tool inside the groove. Hit the tool with your chasing hammer. Move the tool down the groove in the scribed line so that the back end of it is within the area that you just struck.

Hammer the tool with your chasing hammer. Repeat this process to continue chasing your line. Once your line is complete, you can go over it to smooth it out.

To chase the curved lines, rock back on the line tool as if "doing a wheelie" on a bicycle. This shortens the area of contact the tool makes with the sheet metal, which allows the straight tool to go around almost any curve.

Once you have become familiar with the tool, use carbon paper or transfer paper to transfer your design to your sheet metal. Immediately go over the lines with a scriber so they don't rub off when handling the metal. You are now ready to chase the design with the Large Line Tool.





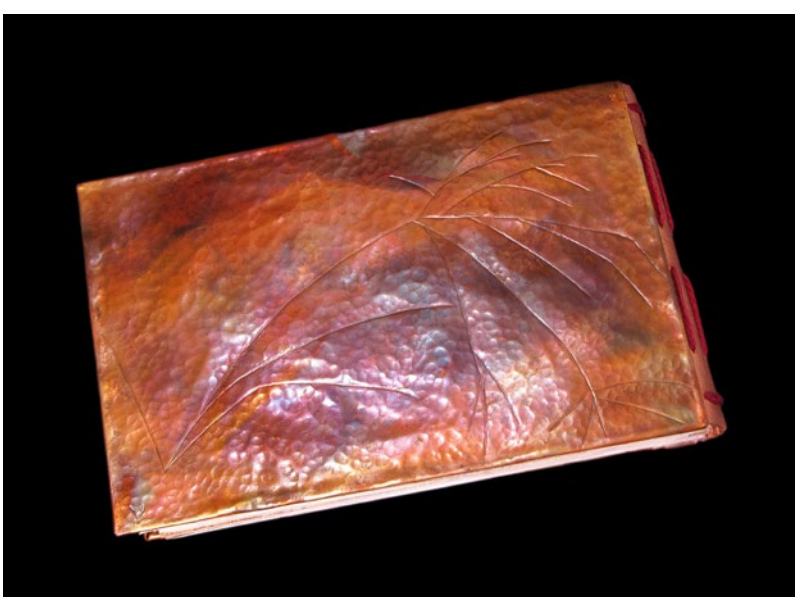
Victoria Lansford
Once and Future Box
(bottom and inside), 1998
Eastern repousséd and line chased sterling silver
2⅜ x 2⅜ x 1½ in.
Photo by the artist

The low-tech method to make a line tool, the ability to practice on scrap brass or copper sheet, and the endless design potential make ornamental line chasing an ideal technique for anyone seeking to build their skills and express their artistic voices, and particularly for those without studio access.

From art jewelry to architectural metalwork for one of the world's largest superyachts, Victoria Lansford creates award-winning timeless treasures. Lansford is the author of the video and book series, Metal Techniques of Bronze Age Masters, iMakeJewelry *app for iPhone™, and* Giving Voice. *She lives in Atlanta, Georgia. Find her online at VictoriaLansford.com*

Victoria Lansford
The Falcon, 2011
Copper, ink, gouache, paper
Photo by the artist

Eastern repoussé (front) and line chased (back) copper, bound artist book



orion

Close a chain. Build up a prong. Resize a ring. **Faster. Stronger. Better.**

Save time and money with an Orion professional pulse arc welder.

Save time and boost profits!
Slash repair times or create new work more efficiently with an Orion welder.

Work with many different metals!
With full energy control, create treasures of silver, gold, platinum, and more![1]

Trust in 15 years of Experience!
Sunstone's expert welding knowledge is empowering jewelers all over the world.

Ask about Sunstone's "Forever Warranty"!

When you join the Sunstone Circle protection plan your Orion welder is always protected.[2]

Call or Text **+1 801-658-0015** • Visit **www.sunstonewelders.com**

sunstone™
The Micro Welder Experts

©2021 Sunstone Engineering LLC. Sunstone and Orion are trademarks of Sunstone Engineering LLC. [1]While all Orion welders will work with many metals, the 150s and 200i models provide the most energy control. [2]Read the Terms of Service for complete details of the Sunstone Circle protection program. **A-METALSMITH JAN 2021**

TECH EVENT

Forging Community in Austin, Texas

March 7, 2020 | Mobile Loaves and Fishes's Community First Village, Austin, Texas

BY ANA M. LOPEZ

Why do sixteen metalworkers from all over the country converge on Austin, Texas, every spring to work like crazy for three hours, then give away their handiwork, and leave? At the Austin Forging Competition, it's all about community.

The event takes place at the Community First! Village, a planned neighborhood established by Mobile Loaves and Fishes that provides permanent housing for the chronically homeless. But it started in the studio of Haley Woodward and Colby Brinkman. In 2010, Woodward and Brinkman were part of the Austin Metal Authority, an ironworking cooperative. They participated in an East Austin studio tour and thought it would be fun to host a forging competition during the event. When they found themselves with 400 spectators and not enough safety glasses, they realized that their shop was the wrong location.[1]

Enter Evan Wilson. After touring the Austin Community College (ACC) welding department, Wilson started taking blacksmithing classes and built a timber frame shelter for what was to become the Community Forge at Community First! Village. The forge is one of the microenterprises that helps the residents support themselves financially. Residents keep all of the profits from selling their forged work to the visitors who come through, and Wilson has witnessed numerous community members regain their dignity through working in the shop.[2]

Woodward and Brinkman both met Wilson while teaching at ACC and eventually suggested holding another forging competition at the Village. And thus, the Austin Forging Competition (AFC) was reborn in 2016. The audience consists of Village residents, Mobile Loaves and Fishes volunteers and supporters, members of the large blacksmithing population in Austin, and locals looking for fun, unusual, or inexpensive entertainment on a Saturday. Caravans of blacksmiths from other states come in increasing numbers every year as word of the competition spreads.

Anne Bujold
Photo: Ana M. Lopez

The participants work simultaneously in eight teams of two, with two rounds of three hours each. The festive atmosphere of frenzied activity is accompanied by food vending, several live bands, and a pop-up store of competition T-shirts and Community Forge work for sale. Tours of the village are offered throughout the day.

The ironworkers who participate are essentially gifting their time. Thanks to donors, Mobile Loaves and Fishes can cover their housing and pay a small travel stipend, but that doesn't come close to offsetting the cost of participation for these working smiths. Wilson hopes that in the future, sponsorship will increase to the point that they are able to better support those who accept the invitation to participate.

Evan Wilson notes that the low-budget nature of the operation also "kind of guarantees that we get the right people on board. None of our competitors are here for the money...they're not here to win any cash prize or anything like that. They're here for the

Left to right: Jesse Bushey, Lewis Body, and Abraham Pardee
Photo: Ana M. Lopez

Left: Aaron Bushey and Jesse Bushey

Right: Shawn Lovell and Toby Sticpewich

Photos: Ana M. Lopez

right reason." He adds, "We get people with an awesome spirit, and that makes it a fun weekend."[3]

Attendance has risen to almost 1,000 people, who come and go throughout the day. One of the 2020 competitors, Anne Bujold, noted the significance of the audience, saying, "This is a really cool event because it's not just for blacksmiths; it's bringing in the public and connecting to a larger social project that's really amazing… We have blacksmithing conferences, but the only people who go to blacksmithing conferences are blacksmiths."[4]

Woodward, Brinkman, and Wilson get together to decide who to invite each year. The previous year's winner is invited back if they wish to defend their title, but those are the only repeat competitors. The participants can make whatever they want, be it functional, sculptural, or comical. Teams have names and sometimes wear costumes. People are still talking about the 2018 competition, in which Mike Rossi and Daniel Beck dressed up as Luigi and Mario of Nintendo fame and spent three hours forging coins, complete with sound effects.

What can you make in three hours? How about a full-size, forge-welded chair? That is precisely the feat that the Bushey Brothers, Aaron and Jesse, pulled off to win this year's competition. They were back to defend their 2019 win, and they came prepared. Jesse said, "We were pretty honored to be asked to show up. So we want to show up with a pretty good game plan and try to execute as nice of a piece as possible. We definitely put in a lot of back-end time." To refine their design and timing, the Bushey brothers made fourteen practice chairs at their home studio in Lake Tahoe before the competition.

When asked if they were planning to compete for a third year, Jesse just laughed. Aaron clarified, "We're still not entirely sure; we'll at least go to the event…but probably." One thing they agree on is that it is the "best forging event in the US," thanks to the intensity of the timeline and the crew that runs it.

Objects made by teams in 2020 included a hardy hole selfie stick by Benjamin Beckett and Chris Leslie, a soap bubble trebuchet by Shawn Lovell and Toby Sticpewich, and a bat-shaped bell by Anne Bujold and Elizabeth Belz. Bujold notes, "One thing about blacksmithing which may be different from metalsmithing or other kinds of making is that a lot of the processes do involve more than one person… By nature blacksmithing is more communal. I mean, who is going to move all this heavy equipment around by themselves? You have to have friends. You have to have people come together. And when we come together, we can make something that is bigger than any of us individually is capable of."

POSTSCRIPT: As of this writing, plans for future forging competitions have been suspended due to public health concerns surrounding COVID-19, and Mobile Loaves and Fishes is "sunsetting" the Community Forge program.

Ana M. Lopez is a metalsmith, educator, and decorative arts scholar teaching at the University of North Texas.

1 Colby Brinkman, co-producer of the Austin Forging Competition, interview March 7, 2020. / **2** Evan Wilson, Community Forge & Woodshop Programs Director, Mobile Loaves & Fishes, phone interview March 4, 2020. / **3** Evan Wilson, March 4, 2020. / **4** Anne Bujold, Austin Forging Competition Competitor, interviewed March 7, 2020.

The Ultra-Lite Kiln

Celebrating 40 Years

Look for the latest model,
the Studio Beehive Pro,
at retailers today.

Visit ***UltraLiteKiln.com/videos*** for tutorials on Keum-boo, Enameling, Granulation, and more.

UltraLiteKiln.com

JEC Products®

Master Casting & Cad

RESPONSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE

JEWELRY CASTINGS

LAB GROWN DIAMOND LINES

100% RECYCLED GOLD

(312) 332-4434 | CASTINGANDCAD.COM

Mill Like a Pro

Carbide 3D

With a compact footprint and a generous work area, the fast and affordable **Nomad 883 Pro CNC mill** from Carbide3D brings high-resolution milling to any workspace. Available only at Rio Grande.

RIO GRANDE®
Since 1944

75 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

For your bench. At your side.

riogrande.com 800.545.6566 #RioJeweler